1. A paleontologist approved by the BLM would be retained prior to the beginning of construction and would be responsible for carrying out the mitigation program.

2. The consulting paleontologist would review project plans and site information and determine those areas of the site where excavations may have the potential to encounter significant fossils (areas of paleontological sensitivity).

3. Areas of paleontological sensitivity would be monitored when excavations or any other activities that could expose subsurface formations are occurring. Paleontological monitors approved by the consulting paleontologist would monitor such activities. Areas of paleontological sensitivity would be marked on project plans used by the construction contractor.

4. The consulting paleontologist would attend at least one preconstruction meeting with the construction contractor to explain the monitoring requirements and procedures to be followed if fossils are discovered.

5. The construction contractor would keep the consulting paleontologist informed of the construction schedule and would perform periodic inspections of construction.

6. In the event that fossils are discovered, the paleontological monitor would immediately inform the consulting paleontologist. The monitor would have the authority to temporarily halt, redirect, or divert construction activities to allow the recovery of fossil material.

7. Any fossil materials collected would be cleaned, sorted, and cataloged and then donated to an institution approved by the BLM with a research interest in the materials.

8. Within six weeks of the completion of construction, the consulting paleontologist would prepare a report on the results of the monitoring effort and would submit the report to the BLM and, if fossils have been recovered, to the institution to which the fossils have been donated.

2.3 Alternative Locations

Other alternative locations were considered by the applicants, but were not considered reasonable, as described below.

2.3.1 West of SDG&E Transmission Line

The applicants considered locating either the BCP or SER transmission lines, or both, west of the SDG&E transmission line in the United States. This location, like the

proposed action, would be located entirely on BLM land in Utility Corridor N of the Desert Plan. Environmental impacts would likely be similar to those of the proposed routes east of the SDG&E lines. However, if the BCP and SER lines were west of the SDG&E line, the two new transmission lines would have to cross the SDG&E/CFE line either in the U.S. or in Mexico. In either case, the crossing of the existing transmission line would add considerable expense to construction and maintenance costs, as well as likely result in an increase in the number of towers required to be constructed on the U.S. side and thus in the area temporarily and permanently impacted by construction.

2.3.2 On Federal Land West of Westside Main Canal

The applicants considered locating the BCP and SER transmission lines on the eastern boundary of BLM near the Westside Main Canal, on the western edge of the agricultural fields in that location. The intent would be to avoid the archaeological resources concentrated along the former shoreline of Lake Cahuilla and also to possibly reduce biological effects by constructing the lines on the border of the natural desert area rather than through it. Since the Mexican lines connecting to the proposed lines are under construction and would cross the border in the proposed location, under this alternative the BCP and SER lines would have to be constructed eastward along the border to the eastern edge of BLM lands, then north along the eastern border of BLM lands, then westward again through BLM lands, probably paralleling the Southwest Power Link, to the IV Substation.

Biological and cultural resource surveys have not been performed along this route. However, the route could offer the advantages for effects on those resources mentioned in the preceding paragraph. This alternative was rejected by the applicants after weighing the possible advantages against the following disadvantages.

- The route would be several miles longer, resulting in considerably higher construction costs and in a larger total area of both temporary and permanent impacts because more access roads and more towers would be required.

- Towers and transmission lines located along the agricultural fields could interfere with agricultural operations, especially aerial crop-dusting.

- The U.S. Border Patrol discourages linear projects that closely parallel the border.

- This alternative would result in two widely separated utility corridors in the same general area, rather than the more compact corridor of adjacent rights-of-way that is proposed.

2.3.3 Outside Federal Lands

BLM lands extend more than 20 miles to the west of the SDG&E transmission line corridor but private lands in the Imperial Valley are within one or two miles of the corridor on the east. Any route to the east or west could not avoid federal lands entirely, since the IV Substation is located wholly within federal lands. Routing the proposed transmission lines farther east than proposed could avoid much federal lands. If the lines were routed directly into the IV Substation from the east parallel to the Southwest Power Link, this alternative would traverse a little over a mile in federal lands. Utility Corridor N of the Desert Plan, however, is designated for the location of utility lines and is the most direct route between the Imperial Valley Substation in the United States and the La Rosita Substation in Mexico.

Routing the transmission lines through private land in the east would require considerably longer routes. The generating facilities and the La Rosita Substation are west of Mexicali and south of the BLM lands. The route of the transmission lines, to use private lands, would have to run east, then north, then back west to connect to the IV Substation. Such a route would be considerably longer, more costly to construct, and would result in a larger total area of impacts. Private lands to the east are being used for agriculture. Any easterly alternative route for the transmission line would displace agricultural lands under towers and/or around poles and create conflicts with aerial crop dusting and other agriculture practices.

2.4 Interrelationship with Other Planned Projects

The applicants are not aware of any projects similar to the proposed action related to power transmission line interconnections to Mexico in southern California other than:

- SDG&E's rebundling of the SDG&E 230 kV circuit position from the international border to the IV Substation; and

- SDG&E's plan to install a second circuit on the existing 230 kV transmission line from the international border to the IV Substation.

Other independent power developers have expressed interest in constructing power plants in the north Baja California area. However, no specific information on such proposals was available.

2.4.1 SDG&E 230 kV Circuit Position Reconductor

The SDG&E 230 kV Circuit Position Rebundling project replaced the single 1033 aluminum conductor steel reinforced (ACSR) conductors in the existing position on SDG&E's 230 kV transmission line from the international border to the IV Substation, on